

CONNECTICUT MARINE TRADES ASSOCIATION

20 Plains Road
Essex, CT 06475-1501

(860) 767-2645 • Fax (860) 767-3559 • e-mail cmta@snet.net

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Environment Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: **Governor's Bill No. 832 AAC Boating Safety**

Chairmen Meyer and Roy;

Distinguished members of the Environment Committee, the Connecticut Marine Trades Association (CMTA) urges you to support **Governor's Bill No. 832 AAC Boating Safety**. The Recreational Marine Industry has over 450 businesses employing 10, 000 hard working people concerned with their recreation and their livelihood. They recognize that recreating outdoors and in many different areas of the state under many different criteria, weather, and environmental constraints, requires a certain standard of care and safety. This bill is designed to increase the penalties for a person who causes the death of another while operating a vessel while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

This bill would address changes to Section 15-140l of the general statutes regarding reckless operation of a vessel in the first degree while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or any drug, or both in such a manner to result in the death of another person. This offense would be raised to a class C felony, manslaughter in the second degree, a more befitting charge in relation to the act and its results.

The original charge of reckless operation in the first degree where there is serious injury or property damage in excess of \$2,000 would have a significant increase in the penalties imposed. They would go up from \$100-1000 and/or six months imprisoned to \$2,500-5,000 and/or two years imprisoned. These changes were prompted by an incident on the Connecticut River where there was significant vessel damage, serious injury to two persons and unfortunately the death of an additional person, all presumably due to the misuse of a power vessel with alcohol. As bad as that incident was, it could have been significantly worse. These penalty increases will hopefully be an active deterrent to the misuse of a vessel while under the influences of alcohol or drugs as have infrequently happened in our state over the years.

We urge you to support **Raised Bill No. 6346 AAC the Regulation of Marine Structures**. These are fitting changes to the statutes and reflect the current outlook on those offenses. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these issues and please know that we are available to discuss them at any time.

Sincerely,

John S. Johnson
Legislative Chair

Grant W. Westerson
Executive Director

Linda A. Kowalski
The Kowalski Group